

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-4. Canceled.

5. (Withdrawn) A method of resin transfer molding a product having a hollow tube therein, the method comprising:

- (a) placing an expandable plug into a hollow tube so that a portion of the plug extends along or beyond the intended finished line of the product being formed;
- (b) expanding the expandable plug so that the expandable plug is pressed against the outer sides of the hollow tube;
- (c) injecting resin about the hollow tube and around the plug in a resin transfer molding process such that excess resin is formed beyond the intended finish line; and
- (d) cutting the excess resin along the intended finish line so that the plug is removed from the final finished part.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 5, wherein the plug comprises:

- (a) a flexible outer bushing having first and second ends;
- (b) a connector attached to the first end of the bushing; and
- (c) a fastener extending along the flexible outer bushing and attached to the connector, the fastener being configured such that actuation of the fastener causes the flexible outer bushing to expand outward, whereby the flexible outer bushing can be inserted into a hollow opening and can expand by actuation of the fastener against the sides of the opening.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 6, wherein the cutting step comprises cutting the fastener so that the outer bushing no longer expands outward and is free to fall out of the hollow tube.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 6, wherein the fastener extends along the bushing and comprises an abutment surface for engaging the second end of the bushing and

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actuation of the fastener comprises causing the fastener to pull the connector toward the abutment surface.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 5, wherein the expandable plug is cut during the cutting process so that the plug is no longer expanded against the sides of the hollow tube and falls out of the hollow tube.

10-34. Canceled.

35. (Withdrawn) A method of forming a radius filler for use in forming a preform to be used in a resin transfer molding process, the method comprising:

- (a) providing unidirectional tows; and
- (b) braiding a sleeve of fibers around the unidirectional tows.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 35, further comprising:

- (a) applying a tackifier to the braided sleeve, the tackifier comprising a diluted solution including the resin to be used in the final resin transfer molding process; and
- (b) consolidating the tackifier so as to lend rigidity to the radius filler.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 36, further comprising:

- (a) adjoining the radius filler with a preform; and
- (b) resin transfer molding the radius filler and the preform.

38. (Currently amended) A method of forming a core structure comprising:

- (a) providing a mold having an internal cavity;
- (b) arranging a sheet of prepreg material around the inside of the internal cavity, the prepreg being of a size such that the prepreg extends around the entire inner circumference of the mold;
- (c) placing an expandable foam material in the cavity of the mold and within the prepreg material;

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(d) heating the expandable foam material so as to expand the foam material within the prepreg material so to press the prepreg material against the walls of the cavity of the mold; and

(e) curing the expandable foam material and the prepreg material so as to form the core structure.

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